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PIONEER LOG CHURCH, COLES COUNTY, ILLINOIS.

BY ALFRED B. BALCH, MARCH 5, 1920.

Formoso, Kan.—[To the Editor:] In searching among some old records I find that the first church built on Indian creek was in 1832. Two years before, August 30, 1830, the Presbyterian church was organized by Rev. B. F. Spilman with the following fourteen members:

Thomas Myers, Agnes Myers, Theron Balch, Ann Boyd, Thos. McCracken, Nancy McCracken, James Ashmore, Cassandra Ashmore, Rachel Ashmore, Wm. Waynes, James Logan and Elizabeth Logan. They met at the cabin of Theron Balch for organization and it was the First Presbyterian church established in Coles county.

The next summer, June 1st, 1831, the members met and agreed to donate so many days of work each, in building a church of logs 24x30 feet in size. Wm. Barnett subscribed 26 spikes and Wm. Wayne, 30 bushels of lime. That fall the church was raised and covered. The flooring was sawed out by a whip saw, the studding and roof were made of slabs split out with a maul and wedge and dressed with an adz. The seats consisted of long slabs placed on trestles, and the church remained in its unfinished condition for about two years.

The member who had subscribed lime having failed to make good his donation, Rev. John McDonald, the pastor who possessed energy in worldly matters as well as spiritual, with the aid of Patrick Nicholson proposed to remedy the deficiency.

Lime rock was found on Indian creek, logs were hauled and placed on and around it, set afire and the rock reduced to lime. Reverend McDonald with the aid of his parishioners made the plaster and with his own hands the worthy Minister plastered the church. It being cold weather the floor was partially taken up and on a bed of sand a fire was built

which was kept burning until the plaster was thoroughly dry.

In 1834 the congregation secured the services of Rev. James H. Shields of Indiana to preach one-half time but this arrangement did not last long and he sent word resigning his pastorate. The Rev. Isaac Bennett was then called to fill the vacancy and he remained for several years. Finally Reverend McDonald became the permanent pastor.

Passing events unless made a matter of record soon glide away on cold oblivion's swift tide and become shrouded in the mist of years.